

Bilateral ties with South Korea

2354. SHRI SANJAY RAUT : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that India pushed the expansion of its bilateral ties with South Korea during the second Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul; and

(b) if so, the details of the bilateral agreement and their investment in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED) : (a) and (b) Prime Minister undertook a visit to the Republic of Korea from 24-27 March 2012 for an official bilateral visit and the second Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul. Prime Minister had a Summit Meeting with the President of the Republic of Korea on 25 March 2012. He also met a group of Korean CEOs. An Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures was signed to encourage greater contacts, travel and engagement between India and the Republic of Korea. A Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between Korea National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA) and Foreign Service Institute (FSI) to exchange faculty, trainees, and best practices was also concluded. The visit by Prime Minister to the Republic of Korea has been instrumental in consolidating the process of bilateral engagement, especially in enhancing trade and investment cooperation, and in deepening the Strategic Partnership with the Republic of Korea.

Appointment of Welfare Officers

2355. SHRI SANJAY RAUT : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Ministry is talking for appointing welfare officers to provide assistance to NRIs who need them in Indian missions in foreign countries; and

(b) if so, by when it is likely to be done?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED) : (a) and (b) Indian Missions and Posts abroad already have Consular/Community Welfare Wings with designated Officers to attend to the welfare issues of distressed Indian nationals. There is, therefore, no proposal to separately appoint Welfare Officers in Missions abroad. The Consular/Community Welfare officers can be contacted by Indian nationals at any time during office hours as well after office hours and on holidays for advice and assistance. Contact details of these officers are displayed both on the website of the Indian Mission/Post as well as on the Notice Boards in the Embassy premises. A 24×7 Helpline is established to deal with issues of urgent nature.